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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)  
BIDEFORD**

# *Lessons from John's Gospel*

## *chapter seventeen*

*“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:22).*

Mortals can never really fathom or comprehend the truth contained in this verse. Here Christ speaks of a **glory** given to Him and which He in turn gives to His people, the elect. It must be emphasised that this is not the glory of **Deity**, which is never to be communicated to man, as Jehovah makes abundantly clear, *“I am the Lord: that is My name and My **glory** will I not give to another”* (Isaiah 42:8). The glory of Deity which the Eternal Son ever possessed being co-equal with the Father was never relinquished, although He humbled Himself and was found in fashion as a man. His essential glory may have been veiled, but He never ceased to be God. The glory that pertains to God in His eternal essence is inherent in equal measure in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and was therefore never **given** to the Son.

It is true that the remnant of grace has been brought into a place of tremendous blessing, but they will never be deified. What then is this glory of which Christ speaks in His prayer? Isaiah chapter fifty-three sets forth the wondrous work of the Saviour, as in full accord with His Father's will He came into the world as a root out of a dry ground; growing up as a tender plant in an arid wilderness. He was despised and rejected by men, who hid their faces from Him and ultimately led Him as a Lamb to the slaughter. There He was wounded for sinners and bruised for their iniquities. Jehovah laid upon Him the iniquity of all His elect people, chosen in a past eternity. It was for the transgression of that people the Lord Jesus Christ was stricken and cut off from the land of the living, the

Divine record stating that it pleased the Lord Jehovah to do this. Here, Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit sets out the very basis of redemption and the only grounds for salvation. Consequent upon the willingness and voluntary offering of the Lamb of God upon Calvary, God the Father states, *“Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death”* (Isaiah 53:12).

A great **inheritance** has been given to Christ in result of His atoning work. Let this be the believer’s primary focus, rather than the inheritance which he receives. In this connection Scripture adds *“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”* (Ephesians 1:18). The Apostle Paul is praying for understanding and enlightenment to the end that we might know the **glory of His inheritance**. Isaiah states, Christ *“shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied”* (Isaiah 53:11). We are further told that for the joy that was set before Him the Lord endured the cross, despising the shame and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God (cf Hebrews 12:2). *“God also hath highly exalted **Him**”* (Philippians 2:9); God hath given Him to be Head over all things to the Church (cf Ephesians 1:22). A wondrous glory has ensued from the work of the Mediator!

The Apostle Peter writes of the sufferings of Christ and the **glory** that should follow (cf 1 Peter 1:11). **This is the glory** that is in view in the verse under consideration, and it is to be shared with all His own *“If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be we suffer with Him, that we may be also **glorified together**”* (Romans 8:17). The glorious truth of spiritual union again appears, as through sovereign grace both Head and members together have title to this glory *“For whom He did foreknow, He*

also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also **glorified**" (Romans 8:29,30). Often, this glory is applied to the eternal state, which is indeed true, but in the purposes of God those who are justified are also glorified even now. Because of the everlasting covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure (cf 2 Samuel 23:5), this whole transaction is viewed by Almighty God as complete and absolutely certain. That **glory** of conquest over sin, death and hell says our Blessed Lord, "*I have given them*", this was the object of the engagement. It was for the joy of seeing the liberation of all His elect, held captive by the Devil, that the Lord endured the cross. This truth was grasped by Paul who wrote, "*Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 15:57). Now, set down at the right hand of the throne of God, Christ sees the riches of the **glory** of His inheritance in the saints (cf Ephesians 1:18); an innumerable company from every kindred, tribe and tongue redeemed unto God. He looks back upon the travail of His soul with a Divine satisfaction and sees the **glory**, which has accrued, from His suffering! The Lord's words to the two disciples on the Emmaus road take on a new dimension in the light of what has been written, "*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into **His glory**?*" (Luke 24:26). This was the hope of Christ's calling as the Mediator; even the **glory** of His inheritance in the saints.

Our verse states, "*that they may be one, even as we are one*". This union is the consequence of the glory given to us in salvation, for we are risen with Christ and seated with Him in heavenly places (cf Ephesians 2:6) and are therefore one with Him in grace and glory. When Christ rose from the dead He did not rise as a single or private individual, but as the **Head** of the Church; the federal or legal representative of all His people. "*Ye then be risen with*

*Christ*” (Colossians 3:1); “*raised us up together*” (Ephesians 2:6). Truly the Christian’s oneness with Christ is unsurpassingly wonderful.

“One in the tomb; one when He rose;  
One when He triumphed o’er His foes;  
One when in Heaven He took His seat,  
While seraphs sang of Hell’s defeat.  
With Him their Head, they stand or fall,  
Their life, their Surety, and their all.”

This union of John 17:22 is not theological fiction; it is a statement made by the Son of God Himself in prayer to His Father. The oneness between God the Father and God the Son is a real, vital and indissoluble union. The believer’s union with Christ is no different, it cannot be broken; neither can all the strategy of Satan or the power of Hell destroy it. “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Romans 8:35-39).

Though death breaks all other unions it cannot break this union, for “*Ye shall **abide** in Him*” (1 John 2:27); “*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*” (Revelation 14:13); “*...absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*” (2 Corinthians 5:8). We are accepted in the Beloved (cf Ephesians 1:6), and this stands for all eternity because we are **one** with Christ, just as He is **one** with the Father. We have the same title to enter the presence of God as Christ has,

who by His own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for **us** (cf Hebrews 9:12). The Holy Spirit further states, *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus...Let **us** draw near”* (Hebrews 10:19,22), for we have been ‘made meet’ for this purpose (cf Colossians 1:12). The amazing similarities of this oneness are expressed on many occasions throughout the Word of God. For example, Christ is His Father’s Son; we are Christ’s sons (cf Isaiah 8:18). Christ is the Father’s delight (cf Isaiah 42:1); the saints are Christ’s delight (cf Psalm 16:3). Christ is the Father’s glory (cf Hebrews 1:3); the believers are the glory of Christ (cf 2 Corinthians 8:23). God is Christ’s Head and Christ is our Head (cf 1 Corinthians 11:3).

The Song of Solomon sets forth the preciousness and intimacy of this indisputable union in a manner unequalled anywhere else in Scripture, as the oneness of Christ and His people is revealed in profound, endearing terms. Harken to the words of the Bridegroom as He speaks to His Bride *“Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee”* (Song of Solomon 4:7). The **glory** of Christ the Bridegroom is upon the Bride; she being clothed in **His** righteousness, there is **no spot** in her. *“Thou hast ravished (enraptured) my heart (v 9); all the delights of the Bridegroom are in His Bride, just as the Father said of His Son at His baptism, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). We hear the Bridegroom speak again, “Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely” (Song of Solomon 2:14). Rebel sinners who from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head are full of wounds, bruises and putrefying sores, present an abhorrent and revolting sight, but when healed, they are clothed in the spotless righteousness of Christ, thus becoming the Bride. Then are they seen in all the glory and splendour of the Heavenly Bridegroom. This is why we redeemed sinners are comely, and He desires to hear our voice responding*

with such words as “*My Beloved is mine, and I am His*” (Song of Solomon 2:16) and “*Yea, He is altogether lovely*” (5:16). Wonderfully does this illuminate our verse in John chapter seventeen, “*And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one*” – what a theme is this!

“And round my heart still closely twine  
Those ties which nought can sever;  
For I am His and He is mine,  
For ever and for ever.

From Him, who loves me now so well,  
What power my soul can sever?  
Shall life, or death, or earth, or Hell?  
**No! I am His for ever.”**

W.H.Molland

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## *The Glories of Our God and King*

A deep and genuine appreciation of the ineffable glory and majesty of the Triune God seems to be in great decline within the Church of Jesus Christ today.

Amongst the numerous Bible Conventions and Group Assemblings of Believers, with all the subjects considered on such occasions, how little is heard of the “*eternal power and Godhead*” (Romans 1:20), of the One “*whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting*” (Micah 5:2). Neither does this glorious theme receive much attention in the proliferation of magazines and papers which roll off the Christian press with ordered regularity. Is not all this an

indication that the ardour and spirit of worship and adoration within the Church is waxing cold?

A perusal of some of the many hymnbooks which have been published over the generations, very soon produce the evidence that when a man's mind is stayed upon his God (cf Isaiah 50:10) and his heart is inditing such a good matter, he will soon speak of the things touching the King (cf Psalm 45:1). He becomes a ready writer, as his spirit soars to such spiritual rapture as to pen such words as:

“My God how wonderful thou art,  
Thy majesty how bright!...  
How wonderful, how beautiful,  
The sight of Thee must be.”

F.W. Faber

“Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.”

W.C. Smith

“Thou fountain of grace, which none can explore,  
Great Ancient of Days, whom seraphs adore.”

J.Kent

“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;  
Bow down before Him, His glory proclaim.”

J.S.B. Monsell

Confronted with the grandeur of such stanzas, how paltry, shallow and oftimes degrading is much of that which is composed today!



However, to learn of the fullest and most comprehensive ascriptions and appellations of the most High God we have to turn to the Holy Scriptures. Here are recorded the inspired utterances of men as they engaged in prayer, psalms, hymns and doxologies being so drawn out in humiliation, supplication and adoration that issuing from their very souls is worship, marked by the *“beauty of holiness”* (1 Chronicles 16:29); worship which is *“in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24). How is this to be explained? These holy writers knew their God; they had an in-depth appreciation of His glorious perfections and attributes. It is *“out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things”* (Matthew 12:34,35). If a man’s heart is not sincere, duplicity being in his life, then the beauty of the Lord our God is not truly upon him. If such a man should lead in prayer or worship, though he employ the majestic phraseology of Holy Writ, how trite, empty and hollow do those words become, dishonouring the very God with whom he claims to be communing.

Of all the doxologies and ascriptions of worship unto the Eternal God recorded in Scripture, those which are found in the pastoral epistles must surely reach the zenith. *“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen”* (1 Timothy 1:17). *“Which in His times He shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen”* (1 Timothy 6:15,16).

Eternal Deity, Supreme thrice holy majesty is in focus in these profound utterances, which demand the attention of every mortal of earth. They will be briefly examined in this article.

**THE BLESSED AND ONLY POTENTATE.** Such a title has reference to none other than the Trinity, without distinction of persons; it is God in the unity of His being; the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, one God, **the Blessed** in personification. He is the essence, the supreme embodiment of blessedness; entirely self-sufficient, infinitely blessed in His eternal being, nothing can impair His serenity or disturb the sublime tranquility of His eternal existence. He is the blessed and only **Potentate**. At once do we see that this blessedness is linked with His dominion. The holy tranquility in which Deity dwells, is due to His supremacy. He is over all, He has no equal. *“For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord?”* (Psalm 89:6). All powers He ordains, all rulers He appoints, all are subordinate to His will and fulfill His purpose, all derive their power from Him. *“By me kings reign, and princes decree justice”* (Proverbs 8:15). *“For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God”* (Romans 13:1). The words written in John’s Gospel chapter nineteen and verse eleven, together with Acts chapter four verses twenty-seven and twenty-eight prove that it was the eternal Potentate who was in control even at Gabbatha, not Herod or Pilate; men of earth only carry out God’s purpose. *“His kingdom ruleth over all”* (Psalm 103:19). *“None can stay His hand”* (Daniel 4:35). He is the **only** Potentate, supreme throughout all dominions.

**THE KING ETERNAL.** *“The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity”* (Isaiah 57:15). **High**, denoting the majesty of His everlasting existence and transcendency of His holy character. **Lofty** signifying grandeur, total independence and self-sufficiency. Inhabiting eternity; before time or matter existed or any creature had a being; dwelling alone in the heaven of heavens, limitless space surrounding Him; such was the solitary majesty of the Great I AM, the Sovereign of the universe. He it is that created all things, that upholdeth all things and directeth all things, ever and always

*“after the counsel of His own will”* (Ephesians 1:11). *“Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high?”* (Psalm 113:5).

**WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY.** This phrase is complimentary to the term *“King Eternal”*. At first it may appear but repetition, for eternal means without beginning and without end. This being so, then the conclusion must be, if God is eternal, He is essentially immortal, which of course is correct. However more is involved in this. As always in Holy Scripture, words and terminology must be examined as to their true meaning, within the correct context. Much truth can be lost, and serious damage may be done, when men are careless in their exegesis. ‘Eternal’ pertains to a dimension, whereas ‘mortality’ has reference to persons. Strictly speaking, ‘immortality’ conveys the sense of ‘deathlessness’. Hence the words *“Who only”* signify that to God alone can deathlessness be ascribed; and this is on account of His impeccable character – His complete inability to sin. *“God cannot be tempted with evil”* (James 1:13). Mortality and death being in consequence of sin, God, who is entirely incapable of evil, is eternally deathless. Thus He is rightly and perpetually styled *“The Living God”*. *“For with thee is the fountain of life”* (Psalm 36:9). He has *“life in Himself”* (John 5:26), that is by essence, not imparted. In this sense God **only** hath immortality. It is perfectly true that holy angels are immortal; redeemed men and women also, on that glorious resurrection day will put on immortality, but that immortal life is derived from God, and bestowed by Him; He alone is the fountain of it. How precise and accurate is the terminology of Holy Scripture!

**INVISIBLE.** This word has reference to reason as well as to sight. God is in Himself beyond creature intelligence. True it is He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, the Living Word, and in the Bible the Written Word. Nevertheless it is, as Matthew Henry has written *“What we know of God is nothing in comparison with what is in*

God and what God is". After all that the great saints of human generations have discovered through the Word, by His Holy Spirit, and have written down and passed on, it still has to be said, "*Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out*" (Job 37:23). In the magnitude of His eternal Being, God is incomprehensible. We cannot attain unto such knowledge and understanding. In the fullness of His Godhead, He is invisible to the human intellect, concealed from man's faculties.

**DWELLING IN THE LIGHT WHICH NO MAN CAN APPROACH UNTO.** There is an overwhelming **clarity** with the eternal God that is totally beyond man. The most discerning eyes of human perception are not just dazzled, they are completely blinded by His brilliance. When mortals draw near to Him, who is Eternal Light, they can only approach by faith; never by reason, for Deity dwells in a glory unapproachable. This is graphically portrayed in Holy Writ. "*Thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it*" (Exodus 19:12). "*The Lord said that He would dwell in the thick darkness*" (1 Kings 8:12). Bounds were set, a cloud of darkness created, to hide the effulgence of the Shekinah glory. For "*God is light*" (1 John 1:5). "*The light dwelleth with Him*" (Daniel 2:22). As Paul is communing with His God, infinity is pressed in upon him, his very soul is entranced. **Why!** he exclaims, "*He dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto*". In bewilderment the apostle is lost, he wonders, he worships.

**WHOM NO MAN HATH SEEN NOR CAN SEE.** Moses passionately desired to see something of the Glory of God, but such a request could not be granted, and the reason was made clear to him (cf Exodus 33:18-20). In his epistle John further emphasizes this "*No man hath seen God at any time*" (1 John 4:12). The world is full of Him, the entire universe exhibits Him, "*The heavens*

*declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork*" (Psalm 19:1). This is not to see God, but only that which He has wrought; it gives the evidence **that** God is, but it does not reveal **what** He is. The fulness of His glory and person will never be known by His creatures for He is limitless. Even in heaven, as eternity rolls on, shall we His redeemed people discover more and still more of the wonder of the true and living God; but never in endless ages shall we come to the end of our discoveries of His greatness and power, for "*His greatness is unsearchable*" (Psalm 145:3). As Paul is engaged in this wonderful prayer of adoration it is quite apparent that by faith he is transported above the clouds, he is in the Spirit and in the glory. Catching something of the atmosphere of the celestial world, his words are few; his statements terse, but sublime; his heart is full and pulsating with worship.

**TO THE ONLY WISE GOD.** The prayer is reaching its crescendo; appreciation is running yet deeper, the omniscience of Deity is being more fully contemplated; infinite knowledge and wisdom is permeating the mind "*Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite*" (Psalm 147:5). "*There is no searching of His understanding*" (Isaiah 40:28). The sagacity of the most enlightened creature ever made is as nothing when compared with the wisdom of God. The wisdom of seraphs is but folly to the most High God. Any degree of wisdom which a man or an angel may possess is imparted by the Almighty. "*In wisdom hast Thou made them all*" (Psalm 104:24). By wisdom He made the heavens (cf Psalm 136:5). For creation in its every aspect, God is to be magnified.

There is yet a further height to scale, a distinguishing trait, a peculiar feature of Divine wisdom, which surpasses all else, it is "*The wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory*" (1 Corinthians 2:7).

The hidden wisdom of God in ordaining sinners unto eternal life before the foundation of the world (cf Ephesians 1:4). Truth beyond the human intellect indeed. “*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!*” (Romans 11:33). So with a heart throbbing with adoration Paul concludes this wonderful doxology, **to Him be honour and glory for ever and ever.**

O the glories of our God and king! To what degree do we know and appreciate Him? Is it an exaggeration in this twenty first century to state and apply those words written millennia ago “*How little a portion is heard of Him?*” (Job 26:14).

W.H. Molland

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“Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued, investigation of the great subject of the Deity. The most excellent study for expanding the soul is the science of Christ and Him crucified and the knowledge of the Godhead in the glorious Trinity. ...This is the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can engage the attention of a child of God. ...There is something exceedingly improving to the mind in the contemplation of the Divinity. It is a subject so vast, that all our thoughts are lost in its immensity; so deep, that our pride is drowned in its infinity. Other subjects we can comprehend and grapple with; in them we feel a kind of self-content, and go on our way with the thought, ‘Behold I am wise’. But when we come to this master science, finding our plumbline cannot sound its depth, and that our eagle eye cannot see its height, we turn away with the thought ‘*We are but of yesterday, and know nothing*’” (Job 8:9).

C.H. Spurgeon

# ***“Shew Me Thy Glory”***

## **Isaiah chapter 6**

The reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, was both long and prosperous. The divinely-recorded history of his fifty-two year ascendancy reads as a catalogue of agricultural, structural and martial triumphs (cf 2 Chronicles 26). Yet the scene of Uzziah’s life closes in the ignominy and isolation of terminal leprosy. No ordinary disease was this, but God’s agent for retribution upon the sin of presumptuous incense-burning. At the very height of his powers, Uzziah had the temerity to invade the priest’s office, and dare to offer sacrifice unlawfully. He suffered the consequences of that offence for the rest of his earthly existence.

What precipitated this gross trespass, this violation of divine order in worship, on the part of an otherwise good king? Like so many Christians today, he lacked a true conception of the God whom he claimed to serve. Amongst his other accomplishments, Uzziah had not attained a resolute appreciation of the King of Kings. His loftiest view of the Almighty was at best earth-bound, marred by arrogance and self-sufficiency.

The causes and consequences of sin have not changed with the passage of time. A narrow, secular, or world-beclouded view of God continues to be the source of deterioration in Churches and declension in Christians in the present day. Thus it will ever be, for an ‘unknown God’ will never be more than ‘ignorantly worshipped’ (cf Acts 17:23). How can a person love God, who has not by faith beheld His beauty; or trust God, who has not observed His omnipotence; or serve God, who has not seen His supremacy? If faulty spiritual sight be the root of the problem, and Uzziah’s experience a type of the dangers engendered thereby, surely we

would wholeheartedly adopt Moses' prayer as our own: "*Lord...I beseech thee, shew me Thy glory*" (Exodus 33:18).

In the selfsame year that this monarch succumbed to the effects of God's judgement, Isaiah the prophet 'saw also the Lord'. How far superior was the vision imparted to Isaiah, from that dim view of king Uzziah's; and how different the outcome. Consider then the detail of the prophet's revelation, the Divine attributes here set forth, the glorious aspects of Deity unmistakably displayed.

The Lord appeared "*sitting upon a throne*" (Isaiah 6:1). The throne is symbolic of **sovereignty**, kingship and dominion. The seated attitude of its majestic occupant signifies His absolute authority and control, the eternal security of His kingdom, the irrevocability of His will and purpose. Before Him, none else may sit; either they fall, prostrate at His feet, fly to do His bidding, or flee away (cf Revelation 20:11). This throne is "*high and lifted up*" denoting its Celestial establishment, for "*The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all*" (Psalm 103:19). What a contrast is here presented between the true King of Israel, and the earthly bearer of that title who so feebly typified Him! The latter was subject to change, decay and mortality, no longer sitting on a throne, but lying and dying in 'a several house' (or, quarantine hospital, cf 2 Chronicles 26:21). Not so the King eternal, immortal; His throne "*is for ever and ever*" (Psalm 45:6). Even time and existence are subservient to His rule.

Isaiah also glimpsed something of the **infinity** of God, and His unfathomable magnitude. The Temple may have been the most vast and capacious building in Jerusalem, but it still could not accommodate the nethermost fringe of the robe of its immeasurable inhabitant: "*His train filled the temple*" (Isaiah 6:1). How rightly did Solomon, artificer of that temple declare "*behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this*



*house which I have built!*” (2 Chronicles 6:18). It was a sentiment echoed by the myriad voices of hosts of seraphim, who cried: “*the whole earth is full of His glory*” (Isaiah 6:3). Little wonder then, that the temple doorways, which defined its boundaries, quaked at the sound of His voice, as though they would burst at the fulness therein confined. Oh the immensity of God! Man, at the pinnacle of his mental powers, with the broadest stretch of the imagination cannot even ‘touch the hem of His garment’.

Various evidences from this vision prove that God was present in the **Trinity** of His person. He is styled in three distinct ways: ‘Lord’ (Adonai), ‘LORD’ (Jehovah), and ‘LORD of Hosts’ (Jehovah Sabaoth). In the New Testament, where this vision is repeatedly referred to, we learn that the pre-incarnate Christ was here present (cf John 12:36-41), and the voice of the Holy Spirit was heard (cf Acts 28:25). The Lord takes to Himself the plural pronoun, saying “*who will go for us?*”, whilst the seraphim confirm the appearance of Triune majesty with the threefold chorus “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Host*”. Who can justly claim any real understanding of this impenetrable mystery? Not only is the glory of God three times that which man may ever conceive, but there is a further glory borne of His tripartite character; three Divine Persons acting in eternal union, in creation, redemption and revelation; an incomprehensibly glorious harmony of Deity. Sinless spirit beings could but sing in rapture and wonderment, and so should we:

“Almighty God to Thee  
Be endless honours done,  
The undivided Three,  
And the mysterious One:  
Where reason fails, with all her powers,  
There faith prevails, and love adores.”

For all its awe-inspiring greatness, Isaiah's vision was not entirely clear or lucid. The image of God was obscured by a thick, swirling smoke which enveloped the temple (cf Isaiah 6:4). This does but set forth the ineffability and **invisibility** of God. Be it the unapproachable brilliance of holiness, or the darkness of His judgmental purposes, there is that by which He is veiled from human sense. It is a feature of God's glory, that none will ever see or know the entirety of His person; there will eternally remain that which "*no man hath seen, nor can see*" concerning Him. "*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out!*" (Romans 11:33). It is a common feature of Divine appearances to man that their attention is diverted to peripheral details of the scene, be it the emerald rainbow around Him (cf Revelation 4:3), or the sapphire pavement beneath (cf Exodus 24:10), or the smoke and seraphim as in Isaiah's case. The God who is the centre and sum of the revelation is glorious beyond the description of words, imperceptibly great.

It was impossible for Isaiah to remain unaffected by what he saw. Even so the Christian, who has gained but a small appreciation of the things of God will be mightily affected by the sight. Observe then the three consequences of the vision here recorded. **CONVICTION** "*Then said I, Woe is me! For I am undone*" (Isaiah 6:5). The prophet's first response was one of abject self-abasement, and penitential humility. His view of God was accompanied by fresh revelation concerning himself – in all his sin and uncleanness. The sheer magnitude of difference between creature and Creator was impressed afresh upon his trembling consciousness, eliciting the mournful wail "*Woe is me!*" Such is the consistent response of all the true people of God, whenever He appears in His glory and power. Physically or mentally they prostrate themselves to the ground, mindful of that dust from whence they are formed, and the earth by which they are soiled. Said Peter: "*Depart from me; for I*

*am a sinful man, O Lord*” (Luke 5:8); and Job was similarly afflicted: *“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes”* (Job 42:5,6). Real heart-conviction, and sorrow for sin on this scale is practically unknown in the present-day church. The reason for this chronic deficiency now becomes clear – it is due to a defective view of God. Without a conception of His holiness, purity, glory and power, man has no measure of his own sinfulness, depravity, baseness and weakness. Consequently there is no fear of God, repentance from sin, or dependence upon grace at conversion; neither is there seen any holiness of life, abhorrence of evil, or devotion to duty amongst many established Christians. How we should pray for our spiritual eyes to be opened, that as God reveals Himself, we may behold ourselves aright, by the light of His holy effulgence.

**CONSECRATION.** (Isaiah 6:6,7) Accompanying this spectacle of glory came a purifying power, and a sanctifying influence. Isaiah’s contrition was followed by cleansing. Even so it must be, a true comprehension of God’s glory is a deterrent and purgative of sin. Who would dare to harbour iniquity before so awesome a Sovereign? How can evil persist in the presence of One so ‘glorious in holiness’? Those who have been touched by the consuming, fire-like nature of God will not henceforth build with wood, hay and stubble.

It was by this vision also, that the prophet was prepared and equipped for his life’s work. Not by lengthy professional training, nor by years of education in theology, but by a sight of the glory of God. Those who seek their ordination at the hands of men, or in the halls of education and academia should look higher, and ‘seek the Lord, if haply they might find Him’, and receive a Divine vocation. Thus is seen the twofold consecration administered in the glory of God’s presence: separation from sin, and preparation for service.

**COMMITMENT** (Isaiah 6:8-13). The practical effects of Isaiah's heavenly vision are amply demonstrated in verse eight, where upon hearing the Lord's call he responds immediately, unreservedly and wholeheartedly. This was in spite of the nature of his mission, which to human reason appeared both hard and hopeless; he was to bring the savour of death unto death to the perishing of Israel. This commitment and devotion to such a thankless task arose from an appreciation of the glory of God, and a righteous jealousy for it. All those who by faith have seen this glory are inspired and motivated by the sight, dedicating their energies to its glorious increase, "*that God in all things may be glorified*" (1 Peter 4:11). With this objective in view, hardships are overcome, and obedience is sustained. Isaiah knew that God was glorified by faithfulness, not earthly success, and this sufficed; he devoted himself to the work in hand. Here then is the pattern for every Christian, "*whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God*" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

The life-changing, soul-stimulating results of the revelation of God's glory are thus portrayed. How every right-thinking Christian should seek after a greater appreciation of their Lord; to see Him in the fulness of His divine attributes that the consequent blessings may abound. Yet the most remarkable and immense transforming effect of the appearance of God's glory is reserved for that day when faith becomes sight, when we shall see Him as He is, and be made like Him (cf 1 John 3:2). "*Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body*" (Philippians 3:21). Lord haste that day!

“O use me Lord, use even me,  
Just as thou wilt, and when, and where,  
Until Thy blessed face I see,  
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.”

R.J.Steward

# PONDERABLES

## IMPULSIVE MINISTRY

Impulsive ministry, without previous preparation! It is of the same class of errors as those which characterize Popery, being an attempt to set up a higher standard of holiness than God's. We as little deny the truth of God's promise that our bread shall be sure by going to our daily work to earn it, as we do that of the Spirits' help by studying God's Word in dependence on His guidance in order to minister to others. We have no more reason to expect the bread of life to be miraculously supplied to us for feeding others than we have the natural bread. Natural understanding is given to us to obtain the one, and spiritual understanding to attain the other; thus Paul's exhortation to Timothy, that in order that his profiting should appear in all things, he should give himself to reading.

A.N.Groves

## ADVICE TO PREACHERS

1. Understand your text.
2. Confirm your view by private reference to the original language.
3. Strengthen your thoughts by once more reading the whole context.
4. Avoid a display of learning; criticize in the study; teach in the pulpit.
5. Divide your subject – it helps the hearers.
6. Speak in short sentences – it helps the preacher.
7. Use plain words – they are good for all sorts and conditions of men.
8. Avoid parentheses – they trouble the speaker and puzzle the hearer.
9. Speak in the first person singular – it gives reality.
10. Avoid the first person plural; monarchs speak thus, preachers should not.
11. Apply pointedly.
12. Rebuke boldly.
13. Warn lovingly.
14. Encourage heartily.
15. Preach frequently with your tongue.
16. Preach always by your life.
17. Honour the Holy Spirit.
18. Remember your Master – seek His glory, not your own.

ANON

## EDITORIAL

It does not require an in-depth investigation to disclose the fact, that speaking generally, Christians lay tremendous stress upon former men of their particular denomination, e.g. –

PRESBYTERIAN – Knox, Erskine, Chalmers.

ANGLICAN – Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer.

METHODIST – Wesley, Whitefield, O’ Bryan.

BAPTIST – Gill, Philpot, Spurgeon.

BRETHREN – Darby, Müller, Groves.

Much attention is given to epochs and occurrences in the Church at different times and places; such as reformations, revivals, seasons of definite spiritual movements, and men who figured in them at the time. So appear such names as Luther, Calvin, Arminius, Erasmus, Owen, Fox, Watts, Hill, Carey and vast numbers of others. All this can be very interesting, and within limits, profitable, provided it is honestly set forth, which sadly, is not often the case.

How frequent it is, when a Scripture is quoted, verbally or in writing, for one of these illustrious figures to be brought in to substantiate the inspired Word cited. What a serious practice this is! Would it not be far more to the point for the Scriptures to be brought to bear both positively and negatively upon the persons adduced?

The need of the hour is for the **great name of the Lord** to be sanctified in the midst of His people. When this is so, the unregenerate will see the reality of our profession (cf Ezekiel 36:23). Let the excessively venerated characters of history lie, until the day of resurrection, and the godly remnant of this age set up their banners in the name of **their God** (cf Psalm 20:5). “*Let no man glory in men*” (1 Corinthians 3:21). “*But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*” (2 Corinthians 10:17).